

Birds in the Brak and Sabha regions of central Libya, 1981-82

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In his check-list *The Birds of Libya*, Bundy (1976) collated separately records of birds seen in the Fezzan region of Libya (south of 30°N, west of 19°E) on the basis of the few published papers. I reported bird records for the Brak and Sabha regions (27°N, 14°E) of the Fezzan for September 1980 to June 1981 (Cowan 1982). The present paper reports my continued observations in the Brak and Sabha regions, from 28 August 1981 to 24 June 1982. Acquisition of a car considerably improved my exploration of the area and, for example, allowed discovery of a further pool at Ashkidah which provided the Ashkidah breeding records in this paper. I had first visited the lake at Sabha in late March 1981. Subsequently I was able to visit the lake during autumn and winter also.

Sites mentioned are shown on the map in Cowan (1982) though I have changed the spelling of Maharouga to Al Mahruqah (National Atlas 1978). Al Mahruqah, Aqar, Brak and Ashkidah are settlements in the Wadi ash Shati. South of the Shati, across an arm of the Awbari Sandsea, is the town of Sabha. West of Sabha, in the Awbari Sandsea, is Gabroan village. Wetland areas are present in the vicinity of these settlements and include pools or small lakes. In the following list the sequence of species and checklist number of Bundy (1976) are used.

3. *Podiceps nigricollis* Black-necked Grebe. Noted at Sabha on 2 dates in Sep, one in Oct, one in Nov, 2 in Jan, one in Feb and one in Mar, 2-5 birds, but 10 in Feb. Also at Sabha, 6 grebes, presumably this species, once in Dec. First records of any grebe in the Fezzan.

11. *Phalacrocorax carbo* Cormorant. One at Brak, 19 Oct. First Fezzan record.

12. *Ardea cinerea* Grey Heron. Maximum seen c. 75 at Sabha on 1 Oct, but otherwise, and apparently in past (Bundy 1976), only seen in small numbers.

15. *Botaurus stellaris* Bittern. One Sabha 24 June. Previously recorded Apr and Oct (Bundy 1976).

18. *Egretta garzetta* Little Egret. Maximum seen, 28 at Sabha on 22 Sep. In autumn, only singles mentioned by Bundy (1976) although a similar maximum was recorded in autumn by Cowan (1982).

20. *Nycticorax nycticorax* Night Heron. Maximum, c. 25 at Sabha on 1 Oct. Apparently previously recorded only in small numbers in autumn.

23. *Platalea leucorodia* Spoonbill. Singles at Sabha, 21 and 22 Sep, 1 Oct, 8 Nov and 19 Apr and at Ashkidah 17, 23 and 27 Apr. Two previous Fezzan records.

24. *Plegadis falcinellus* Glossy Ibis. Records include 21 at Sabha on 21 Sep. Previously apparently only singles in autumn.

26. *Anas acuta* Pintail. Seen on 28 dates Sep-June, maximum c. 50 at Sabha, 23 Oct and at Ashkidah, 30 Oct. Maximum for the 5 dates Dec-Jan, c. 20 at Brak, 28 Jan. Bundy (1976) mentioned small numbers Oct-Nov, Feb-Apr.

29. *Anas clypeata* Shoveler. Recorded Sep-Dec on 6 dates, maximum 10

at Ashkidah on 16 Nov and Mar-Apr on 7 dates, maximum c. 15 at Ashkidah 5 Apr. Also one at Sabha, 24 June. Only one previous Fezzan record.

30. *Anas crecca* Teal. Recorded on 5 dates, Dec-Mar. Maximum, c. 25 at Sabha, 21 Jan. Previously recorded Sep-Nov only, apparently singles (Bundy 1976).

33. *Anas querquedula* Garganey. Recorded Sep-Nov on 4 dates and Feb-June on 14 dates. Maximum, 20 at Brak, 19 Sep. Bundy (1976) mentions records on 2 autumn dates, Cowan (1982) on 2 spring dates, involving small numbers.

37. *Aythya ferina* Pochard. One at Sabha, 23 Oct. First Fezzan record.

38. *Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck. One at Sabha, 8 Nov. First Fezzan record.

39. *Aythya nyroca* Ferruginous Duck. Recorded Sep-June on 22 dates, maximum c. 100 at Sabha, 23 Oct. Jan maximum, 24 at Sabha, 6 Jan. June maximum, 28 (excluding downy young) at Ashkidah, 13 June. Previously only recorded Oct-Nov (Bundy 1976). Breeding records (at Ashkidah): several sightings in June of 2 females each rearing a single brood. When last seen brood size down to 8 and 5 downy young respectively. First Fezzan breeding records.

58. *Circus aeruginosus* Marsh Harrier. Recorded Sep-June on 31 dates, maximum 4 at Sabha, 8 Mar. Includes 2 dates in Dec, 3 in Jan and 2 in Feb. First January records for the Fezzan.

64. *Hieraetus pennatus* Booted Eagle. One Gabroan, 21 May. 3rd Fezzan record.

74. *Falco concolor* Sooty Falcon. One Sabha, 24 June. 4th Fezzan record.

81. *Falco vespertinus* Red-footed Falcon. One Sabha, 10 May. First Fezzan record.

85. *Grus grus* Crane. One at Ashkidah, 5 Dec. First Fezzan record.

87. *Fulica atra* Coot. Recorded Sep-June on 31 dates, maximum c. 140 at Sabha on 18 Feb. Autumn maximum, 72 at Sabha, 8 Nov. Includes 5 dates Dec-Jan, maximum 45 at Sabha, 6 Jan. Apr-June maximum excluding downy young juveniles, c. 60 at Ashkidah 17 Apr, 29 May and 7 June. Bundy (1976) mentioned only singles Oct-Nov, while Cowan (1982) had 2 spring dates involving only a few birds. Breeding records: a small number of broods reared at Ashkidah and apparently also at Sabha. Sightings of broods of downy young at Ashkidah late May to 19 June, maximum c. 4 broods on 29 May. Juveniles present Ashkidah in June, maximum of 6 seen on 7 June. 7 juveniles seen at Sabha 24 June. First Fezzan breeding records.

88. *Gallinula chloropus* Moorhen. Recorded Sep-June. Maximum adults seen 22, Ashkidah 19 June. Breeding records: at Ashkidah, one brood of downy young 29 May and one, apparently a different brood, 5 June. Juveniles at Ashkidah, Brak, Al Mahruqah and Sabha in June, maximum 7 Ashkidah 19 June. Breeding colony previously reported from Sabha (Bundy 1976). Probably a resident breeder at all suitable localities in west central Libya.

96. *Charadrius alexandrinus* Kentish Plover. At Sabha, singles on 15 Dec and 6 Jan. At Ashkidah seen Apr-June on 13 dates, maximum 4 (excluding downy young). Previously, singles on 5 dates in autumn (Bundy 1976). Breeding records (at Ashkidah): sightings involving at least 3 different broods. Observations of downy young Apr and June, including 2 broods of 2 downy young each on 19 June; one juvenile 2 May; nest with 3 eggs 5 June. First breeding records for the Fezzan.

97. *Charadrius dubius* Little Ringed Plover. One on 22 Sep, 2 on 1 Oct and 2 on 21 Jan at Sabha. Also recorded Mar–Apr. First autumn and winter records for the Fezzan. One unseparated *dubius*/*hiaticula* at Sabha, 6 Jan.

98. *Charadrius hiaticula* Ringed Plover. 3 at Brak on 11 Sep, 3 at Sabha on 1 Oct and one at Ashkidah on 5 Nov and 14 May. First Fezzan records.

102. *Pluvialis squatarola* Grey Plover. One at Ashkidah, 23 Apr. First Fezzan record.

103. *Vanellus vanellus* Lapwing. One at Ashkidah, 5 Dec. Previously recorded by Cowan (1982) only.

105. *Calidris alba* Sanderling. At Ashkidah, one on 2 May and 2 on 24 May. Previously recorded on only 2 dates (Bundy 1976).

106. *Calidris alpina* Dunlin. 2 at Ashkidah, 5 Nov and one at Sabha, 8 Nov. First Fezzan records.

108. *Calidris ferruginea* Curlew Sandpiper. At Ashkidah, 3 on 27 Apr, one on 14 May and 2 on 24 May. 6 at Sabha 10 May and one at Gabroan 21 May. Only one previous Fezzan record.

110. *Calidris minuta* Little Stint. Recorded Sep–June including, at Sabha, c. 15 on 15 Dec, 7 on 6 Jan, c. 20 on 21 Jan and c. 15 on 18 Feb, the first winter records for the Fezzan.

111. *Calidris temminckii* Temminck's Stint. One at Sabha, 22 Sep. First autumn record.

112. *Gallinago gallinago* Snipe. 2 on 22 Sep and one on 1 Oct at Sabha. Also recorded in Mar. An unseparated snipe sp. at Brak, 8 Dec. One previous autumn record.

116. *Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit. Singles at Sabha on 21, 22 Sep and 1 Oct and at Ashkidah on 23, 27 Apr and 5 June. Two previous Fezzan records (Bundy 1976, Cowan 1982).

121. *Philomachus pugnax* Ruff. Recorded Sep–Oct and Mar–June. Also, one at Sabha on 15 Dec, the first Fezzan winter record.

123. *Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank. Recorded on 7 dates Sep–Nov, maximum 4 at Sabha on 1 Oct. Previously, records of 5 birds (Bundy 1976).

124. *Tringa glareola* Wood Sandpiper. One at Brak, 27 Sep. The second autumn record for Fezzan. Also recorded Apr and May.

126. *Tringa nebularia* Greenshank. One at Ashkidah on 30 Oct. Also recorded Apr, May. In autumn, previously, singles on one date only, at Sabha (Bundy 1976).

127. *Tringa ochropus* Green Sandpiper. Recorded Aug–Apr including, at Brak, singles on 8, 21, 24 Dec, 4, 14, 19 Jan and, at Sabha, singles on 15 Dec, 21 Jan. Winter records were first reported by Cowan (1982).

128. *Tringa stagnatilis* Marsh Sandpiper. One at Brak, 27 Sep. Also recorded Apr, May. Only one previous autumn record.

129. *Tringa totanus* Redshank. One at Sabha 22 Sep, one at Brak 27 Sep, 9 Oct. Also Mar, May. First autumn records for Fezzan.

130. *Himantopus himantopus* Black-winged Stilt. One at Sabha, 1 Oct. Recorded on 13 dates Mar–June, maximum 14 at Ashkidah 2 May. No previous autumn records. Previous maxima, 2 (Bundy 1976), 17 (Cowan 1982).

134. *Cursorius cursor* Cream-coloured Courser. One at Aqar 22 Feb and 4 at Sabha 8 Mar. Bundy (1976) mentioned the uncertain Fezzan status of this species, previous records having been Oct–Nov and Feb–May.

136. *Glareola pratincola* Collared Pratincole. 3 at Ashkidah, 24 May. In same flock were a further 3 pratincoles whose underwing colour was not determined. First Fezzan records of pratincoles.

143. *Larus fuscus* Lesser Black-backed Gull. One (*L. f. fuscus*) at Ashkidah on 24 and 29 May. No previous Fezzan records.

147. *Larus ridibundus* Black-headed Gull. At Sabha: one on 1, 23 Oct, 8 Nov; c. 50 on 15 Dec; 40, 6 Jan; c. 30, 21 Jan; c. 20, 18 Feb; 6, 8 Mar; one, 19 Apr. At Ashkidah, one on 28 Jan and 5 Apr. One at Brak, 19 Mar. 3 gulls, presumably this species, Ashkidah, 17 Apr. First recorded Cowan (1982), maximum 16.

148. *Chlidonias hybrida* Whiskered Tern. At Sabha, one on 1 Oct, 4 on 10 May. At Ashkidah, one on 24 May, 2 on 29 May. First Fezzan records.

149. *Chlidonias leucopterus* White-winged Black Tern. One at Sabha, 1 Oct. Second autumn record for the Fezzan. Also, at Ashkidah, 5 on 23 Apr, 3 on 27 Apr, 2 on 24 May and one on 13 June. 7 at Sabha, 10 May.

150. *Chlidonias niger* Black Tern. 4 at Ashkidah, 23 Apr. Previously, 5 birds recorded (Bundy 1976).

151. *Gelochelidon nilotica* Gull-billed Tern. One at Sabha, 1 Oct. Second Fezzan record.

164. *Streptopelia senegalensis* Palm Dove. Recorded Oct–June on 19 dates. Seen at Ashkidah, Brak, Sabha and Al Mahruqah. Probably a resident breeder. First recorded by Cowan (1982).

207. *Riparia riparia* Sand Martin. Recorded Sep–Oct on 8 dates. Also seen Mar–June. First recorded in autumn by Cowan (1982).

215. *Motacilla cinerea* Grey Waytail. At Brak, one on 8 Dec and 27 Feb. Previously, singles on 4 dates (Bundy 1976, Cowan 1982).

251. *Sylvia cantillans* Subalpine Warbler. At Brak, one on 29 Aug, 23 Nov and 4 Jan. One at Al Mahruqah 29 Mar. Bundy (1976) gave one and Cowan (1982) 3 winter dates.

282. *Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat. Though recorded Apr–May as expected (Bundy 1976), no autumn records (cf. Cowan 1982).

283. *Saxicola torquata* Stonechat. One at Brak, 29 Nov. 3rd Fezzan record.

307. *Passer hispaniolensis* Spanish Sparrow. At Brak, 28 Oct–23 Mar with a maximum of c. 1000 on 31 Oct. Cowan (1982) recorded it early Nov to Mar though previously not recorded in Fezzan before Jan (Bundy 1976).

I can add the following species to the list in Cowan (1982) of species seen by myself of which the Fezzan status is reasonably certain (Bundy 1976):—

21. *Ciconia ciconia*; 61. *Circus pygargus*; 79. *Falco subbuteo*; 161. *Pterocles senegallus*; 177/179. *Apus apus pallidus* (unseparated); 192. *Calendrella cinerea*; 203. *Hirundo daurica*; 225. *Ficedula albicollis* (not *semitorquata*); 226. *Ficedula hypoleuca*; 252. *Sylvia communis*; 281. *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*.

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